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STAR WARS™

THE OFFICIAL STARSHIPS & VEHICLES COLLECTION

DROID STARFIGHTER

50

Confederacy of Independent Systems' Vulture-class starfighter

The Jedi Temple

Protocol droid TC-14

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LUCAS BOOKS

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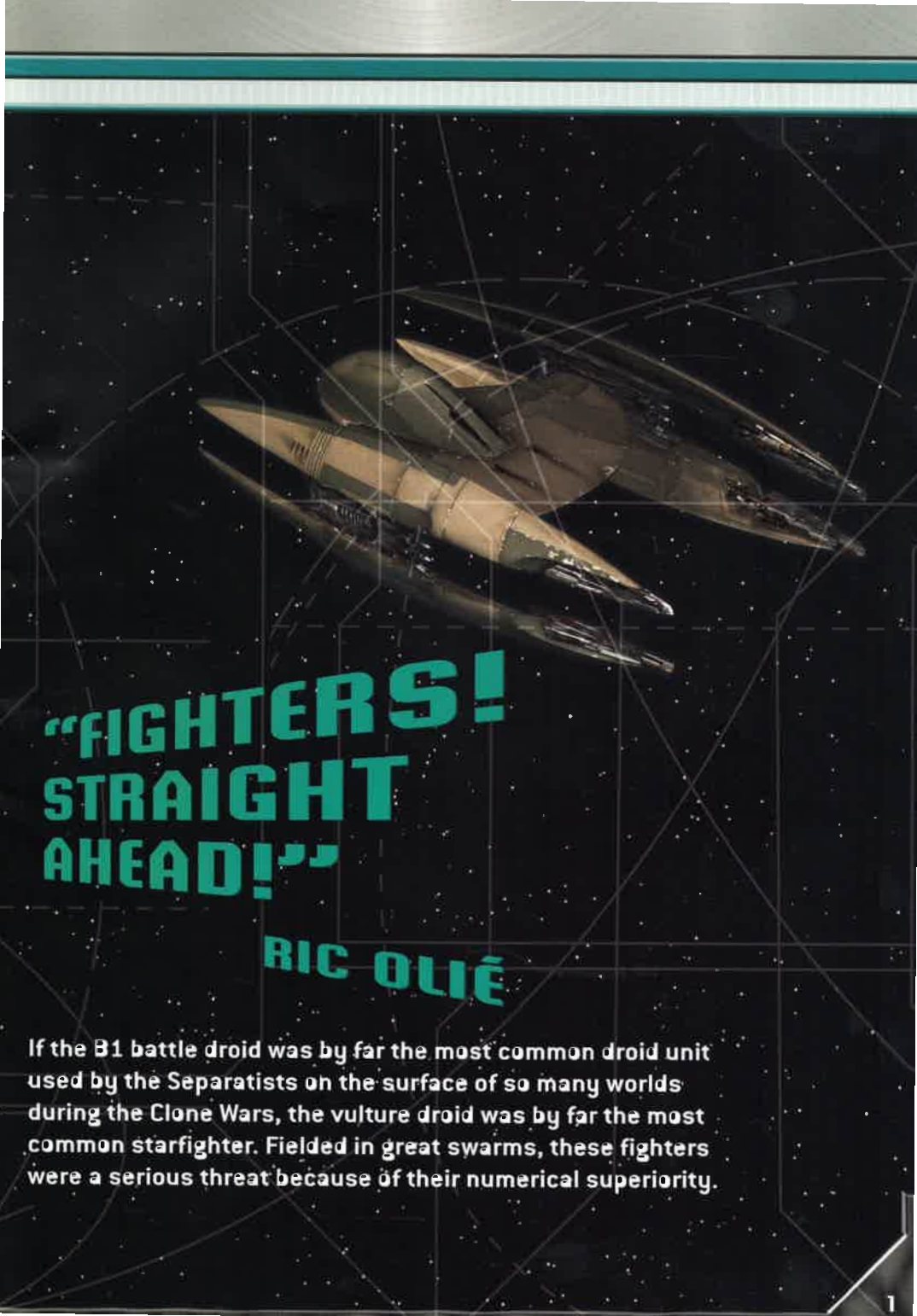
STAR WARS



"FIGHTERS! STRAIGHT AHEAD!"

RIC OLIÉ

If the B1 battle droid was by far the most common droid unit used by the Separatists on the surface of so many worlds during the Clone Wars, the vulture droid was by far the most common starfighter. Fielded in great swarms, these fighters were a serious threat because of their numerical superiority.

VULTURE DROID

VARIABLE-GEOMETRY STARFIGHTER

The *Vulture*-class droid starfighter was an incredibly fast starfighter capable of flight manoeuvres that would have killed any organic pilot. Linked to their droid control ships, vulture droids were able to react and move to neutralise threats quickly, but they used simplistic, predictable tactics.

Designed by Haor Chall Engineering, the insect-like vulture droid was typical of its creators' religious zeal for high-precision design and manufacturing. The Neimoidians of the Trade Federation commissioned the droids and ensured that they had been fully tested before being deployed to the Trade Federation fleets – the paranoid Neimoidians wanted to make sure the starfighter shield they were to hide behind was capable of defending them. In early deployment, the droid starfighters twice defeated pirate groups, something that greatly satisfied the mercantile Neimoidians.

Tough Enough

Vulture droids were able to operate equally well both in space and in a planet's atmosphere – an important consideration in the Trade Federation's plans for the planet of Naboo. In flight, they mounted two blaster cannon on each wing, as well as two energy torpedo launchers on the main fuselage. In normal flight, the blaster cannon were concealed, with the wings opening to reveal the weapons for combat. Much later, vulture droids had a missile launcher installed inside each wing, requiring the wings to split yet

further apart in order to fire. The droids used solid-fuel slugs for propulsion, which limited their flight time to a paltry 35 minutes. As a result, the Trade Federation deployed the droids in carefully timed swarms, with ships swapping out in succession to refuel while others took their place.

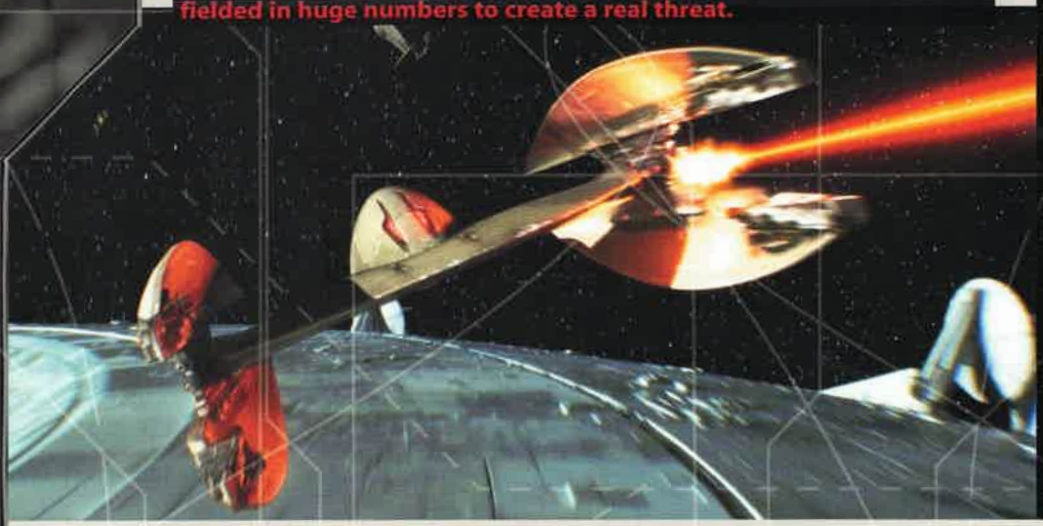
Walkabout

Under normal situations, the *Vulture*-class starfighters were stored in racks in Trade Federation or Separatist ships or installations. In those racks, they could be refuelled, recharged and repaired, and they could be quickly deployed from the racks for patrol or combat duties. Later in the Clone Wars, the droids would also be stationed on the outer surface of large capital ships so as to surprise attacking starfighters or infantry groups attempting to board Separatist craft. Vulture droids were referred to as having 'Variable Geometry' because they could split their wings open entirely and use the four resulting 'limbs' to walk about on patrol as a form of towering battle droids. The vulture droids were successful in their early tests, but the Neimoidians discovered the droids' weaknesses too. In 'walking mode' the vulture droids could only use their torpedoes in attack or defence, as their other weapons were uselessly pointed downward.

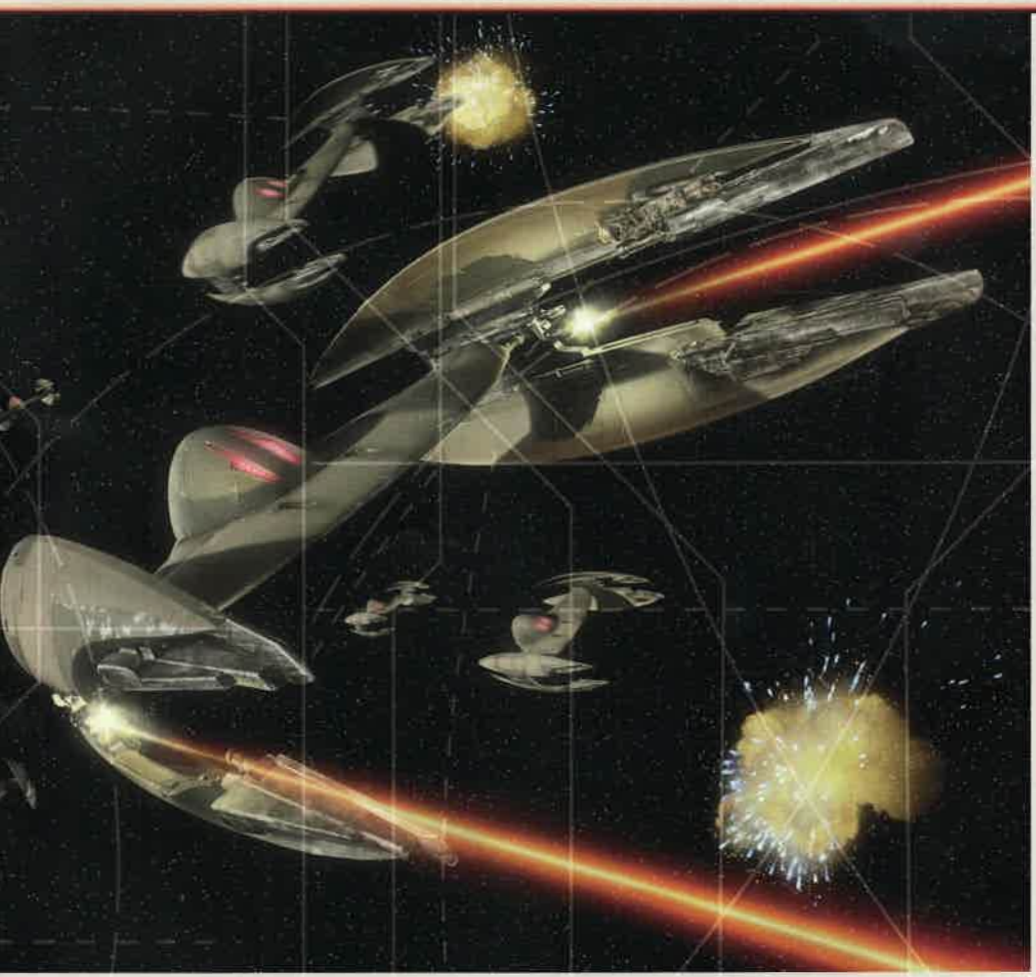
VULTURE DROID ATTACK

THE BATTLE OF NABOO AND BEYOND

While the Neimoidians were content with their mass-produced droid starfighters, the vulture droids quickly revealed that their limitations extended beyond their woefully short 35-minute flight time. Much like the B1 battle droids, the *Vulture*-class starfighter needed to be fielded in huge numbers to create a real threat.



The Naboo first encountered the vulture droids at the Trade Federation outpost Station TFP-9. Not long after, Viceroy Nute Gunray led the Trade Federation forces that were to invade Naboo under orders from Sith Lord Darth Sidious. By now, the Neimoidians understood the foibles of the vulture droids. None too intelligent and lacking the cunning of a seasoned organic starfighter pilot, the actions of vulture droids were predictable. Being unshielded, they were quickly destroyed by better pilots. To compensate for these shortcomings, the Neimoidians fielded vast swarms of the mass-produced droid fighters, relying on weight of numbers to beat down any opponents. The Battle of Naboo showed, however, that this tactic was not always



successful, and the Trade Federation was defeated after the defenders broke through. When the vulture droids lost the signal from the droid control ship, destroyed by young Anakin Skywalker, they all self-destructed – a tactic designed to prevent the droids being captured and analysed by their enemies.

Clone Wars

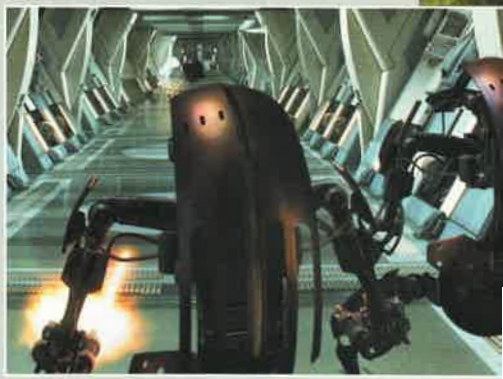
Despite this setback, vulture droids continued to be deployed in a similar way during the Clone Wars. When the Trade Federation joined the Separatists, many vulture droids received the blue and white livery of the Confederacy. The droids were also then produced by both Haor Chall Engineering and other associated companies such as Baktoid Armour Workshop. However, opponents of the Confederacy – particularly the Jedi – had already discovered that the vulture droids were easily confused and slow to react when tricked into firing on Allied forces.

"There are too many of them!" Odd Ball at the Battle of Coruscant

THE DROIDEKA

COLICOID DESTROYER DROID

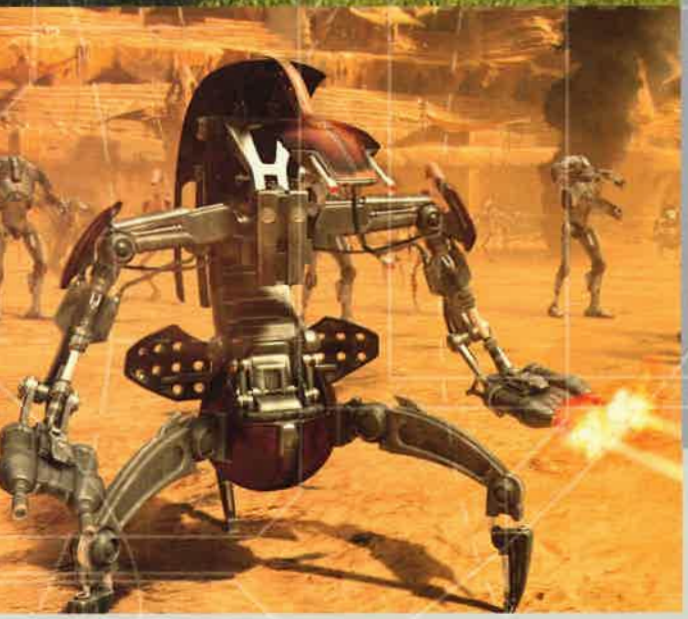
Colla IV was an unpleasant place that spawned the sentient insectoid race of carnivorous and sometimes cannibalistic Colicoids. The droids – including the droidekas – that the Colicoid Design Nest built for the Separatists during the Clone Wars were all as vicious and destructive as their creators.



Despite the name 'droideka' translating as 'droid drone', there was absolutely nothing passive about the destroyer droids. The Colicoids initially created them after they were given some B1 battle droids by their allies and regular customers the Trade Federation to assist in guarding their production facilities. The Colicoids were, frankly, disgusted by the spindly, stupid, fragile little B1 droids, and immediately created their own droid guards in their own image.

Rolling Thunder

The insect Colicoids scuttled around on four of their six legs, with their other pair having evolved into functional hands. To protect themselves or to move more quickly, the species were capable of tucking up into a tight, armoured ball and rolling swiftly away. This was a trait they passed on to the droidekas, though it was used to get the droids to where they were needed. Defence was taken care of through the personal deflector shields the droids generated. The droidekas could fire through the shields, laying down a blistering attack from two heavy repeating twin blaster cannon built into their 'arms'. Meanwhile, they were protected from both energy and projectile infantry weapons, and even a lightsaber blade.



PROFILE

Droideka

Type
Battle droid

Homeworld
Colla IV

Manufacturer
Colicoids

Height
1.83 metres

Weapons
2x twin blaster cannon

Starfighter-grade weapons and heavy infantry weapon assaults could break through the droidekas' shields. However, when hit, the droids' reactors were prone to explode and destroy the droid utterly, despite being held and protected in a bronzium-armoured ball slung under the droid.

"I want droidekas up here at once!"

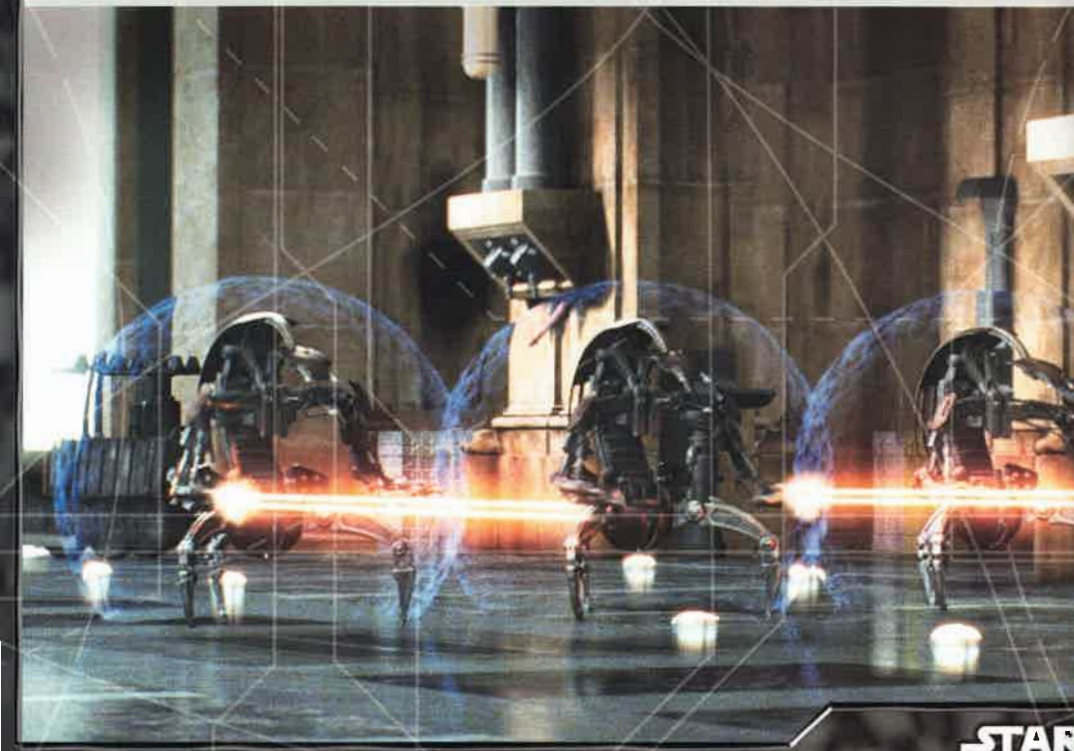
Viceroy Nute Gunray

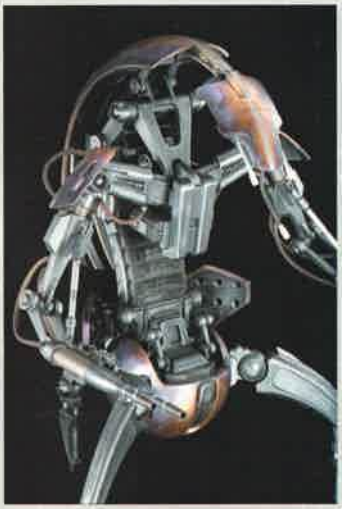
Droideka Unleashed

The Trade Federation delegates were quick to see the potential in the droideka plans and prototypes they were shown. Of course, the Neimoidians weren't about to pay the going rate for these relatively expensive battle droids. Understanding the Colicoids, the Neimoidians shipped in 50 barges of rare, exotic and very raw meat as part of a bartering session that brought the costs of the droideka down to a far more reasonable level. While the Colicoids were content with the deal, they were not content with what the cowardly Neimoidians did to their droideka. Like all the Trade Federation battle droids, the droidekas were slaved to a master control computer, despite the slower reaction times that resulted. The Colicoids built their own, independent models for service on Colla IV. After the Battle of Naboo, which saw the entire droid invasion army shut down when the control ship was destroyed, the Trade Federation followed the Colicoid example and gave their droids a little more independence.

Clone Wars Terrors

It is ironic that some of the droideka recovered from the Naboo conflict were used as guards by the Republic, and even on the Jedi





Did you know...?

During Episode I's pre-production, the droidekas began as bulky battle droids, created by Doug Chiang. Eventually, there were two large droids – one that could roll and one that couldn't. The latter was abandoned. At one point, the designers toyed with a concept that saw the droideka using a unicycle-style wheel to roll on.

Outbound Flight project. However, the Separatist Crisis in the galaxy gave rise to the Confederacy of Independent Systems, and the droideka quickly became a threat once again. On Geonosis, a small force of droideka was used to guard the droid foundries. While they were instrumental in decimating the Jedi in the arena massacre, there were too few droidekas to participate fully in the Battle of Geonosis. This was far from the case during the Clone Wars. Now mass-produced as part of the Separatist army, droidekas were regular and significant foes for the Republic – particularly Jedi. Not all droidekas built during this time were fitted with deflector shields, but their weapons were as fearsome as ever.

Deactivated?

When Darth Vader killed the Separatist leaders on Mustafar, the droid armies were deactivated. However, droidekas would later be used by the Empire and by private organisations such as the Corporate Sector – all proof that the original droideka design had been frighteningly successful.

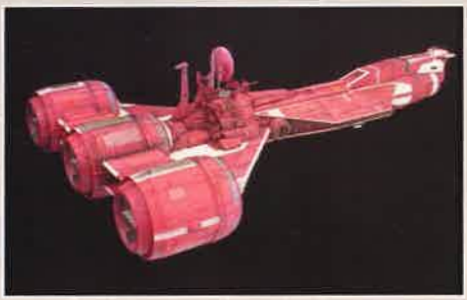
"The Jedi eventually got the measure of the droideka, attacking the droids when they were rolling and unable to use their shields, or knocking them over so their shields short-circuited."

CONSULAR-CLASS REPUBLIC CRUISER

DIPLOMATIC VESSEL

Entering service late in the history of the Old Republic, the *Consular*-class cruiser was a response to tightening budgets that, for once, managed to produce a very fine result.

Designed and built by the Corellian Engineering Corporation, these ships were designed for both civilian use and diplomatic service. Those used by the Galactic Senate officials and the Jedi Order bore the red livery that denoted their diplomatic status and immunity. The distinctive and easily recognised paintwork was supposed to deter anyone from attacking the ship, though this was by no means guaranteed in the troubled times the craft served.



Many Configurations

Corellian starships were known for their modular designs that allowed owners to add to their pride and joy with relative ease. The *Consular*-class starships were also fitted with modular components – specifically the salon pod that was located at the front of the vessel. There were numerous designs of the pod, each able to accommodate the requirements of unique alien species. One thing remained constant, however. The pods were secure, private meeting places laid out for comfort and practicality as arenas for diplomatic discussions and hard bargaining. They doubled as escape pods, since they were fitted with engines, life support and a full sensor package, all designed to get the passengers to safety as quickly as possible. The main vessel had its own escape pods, of course. The diplomatic versions of the *Consular* cruiser were unarmed, though armed versions served the Judicial Forces as light assault cruisers or frigates.

Consular-class Republic Cruiser PROFILE

Type
Cruiser (diplomatic configuration)

Manufacturer
Corellian Engineering Corporation

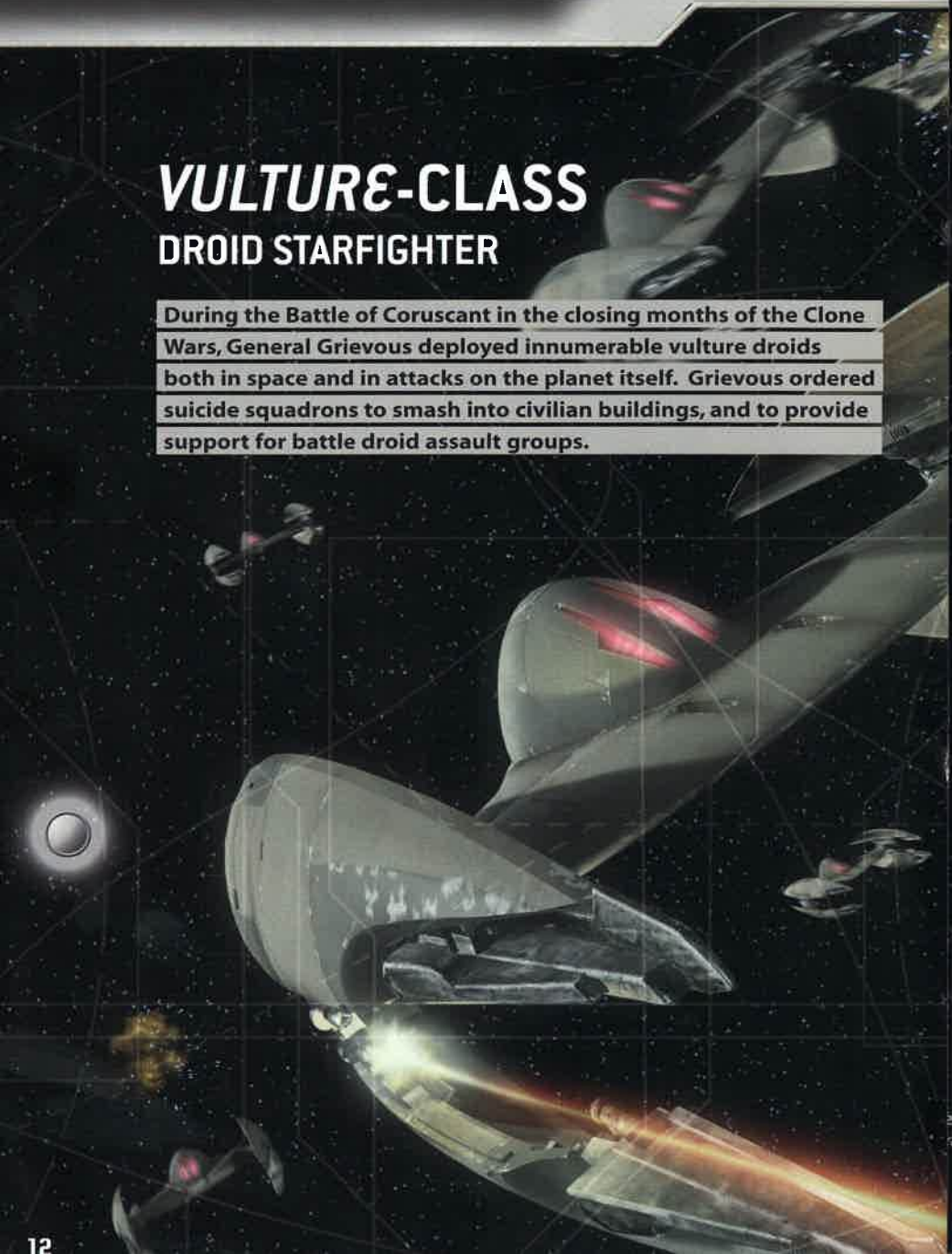
Length
115 metres

Weapons
None

Affiliation
Galactic Republic, Jedi Order

VULTURE-CLASS
DROID STARFIGHTER

During the Battle of Coruscant in the closing months of the Clone Wars, General Grievous deployed innumerable vulture droids both in space and in attacks on the planet itself. Grievous ordered suicide squadrons to smash into civilian buildings, and to provide support for battle droid assault groups.



VARIABLE-GEOMETRY SELF-PROPELLED BATTLE Ddroid, MA

Homeworld
Charros IV

Type
Droid Starfighter

Manufacturer
Haor Chall Engineering, Baktoid Armour Workshop

Length
3.5 metres

Max Acceleration
3900G

Max Speed
1200km/h

Engine
Solid fuel slug system (35 minutes flight time)

Shield System
None

Hyperdrive
None

Weapons
4x blaster cannon (6 in later variant), 2x energy torpedo launchers, 2x missile launchers (later variant)

Crew
Integrated droid brain

Affiliation
Trade Federation, Confederacy of Independent Systems

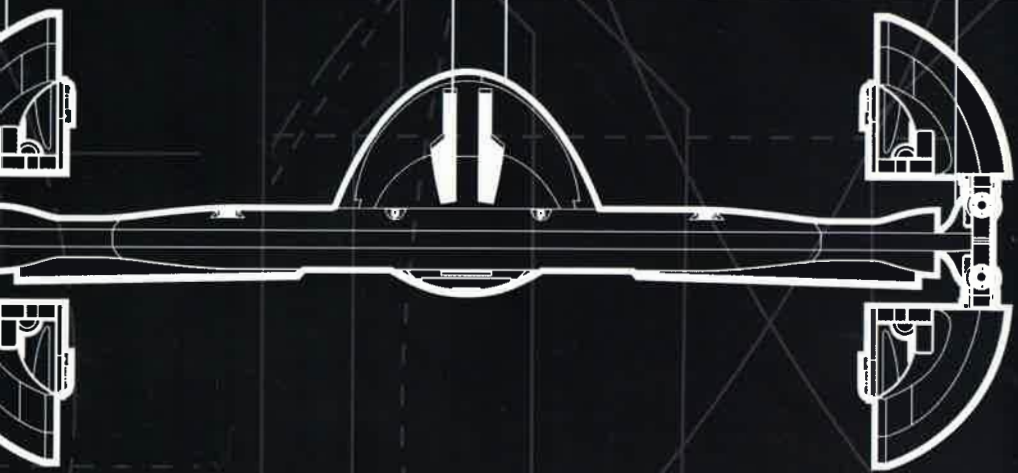
ARK I

Wings split in two to form 'legs' when in walker mode.

Primary sensor ports

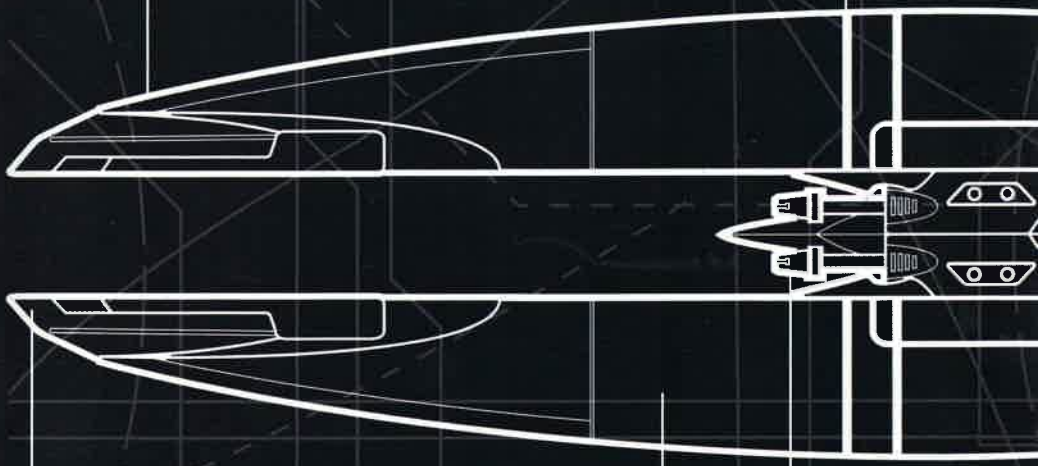
Antenna (covered) for signals from central droid control computer

Claw angle adjust ram/shock absorbers



Walker-mode cla
(retracte

Trade Federation *Lucrehulk*-class battleships carried
starfighters, launched in timed swarms that ensured the 3
did not compromise the safety of the vessel. Vulture droids in
patrol the various landing bays of the Trade Federation vess
with their smaller B1 and B2 colleagues throug


Hydraulic systems extend/ retract the 'claws' used in walker mode.
Power convertors a power cells for the blaster cannon.
claws acted)
Light non-magnetic Alclad alloy plating
Fight assault lasers

l 1500 vulture droid
5-minute flight time
walker mode would
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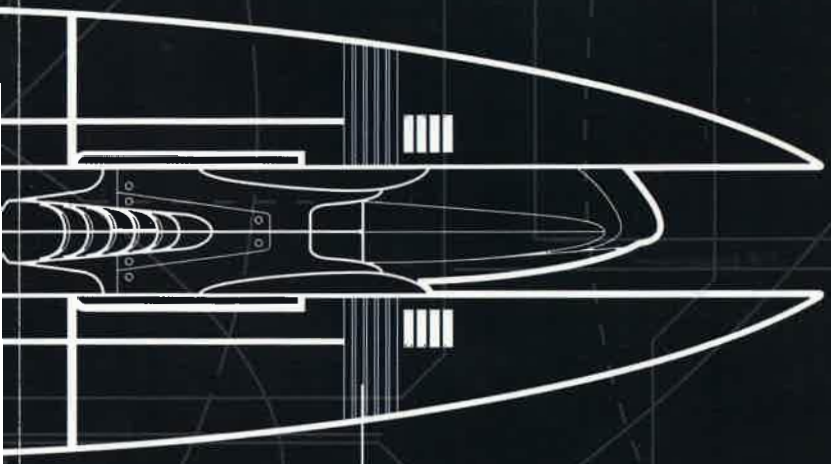


Landing repulsor bands

PROTOCOL DROID TC-14

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

The Neimoidians were particularly hard on their droids, considering them as disposable assets from purchase to scrap yard. Maintaining the loyalty of the more intelligent models required regular memory wipes, as was the case with TC-14.

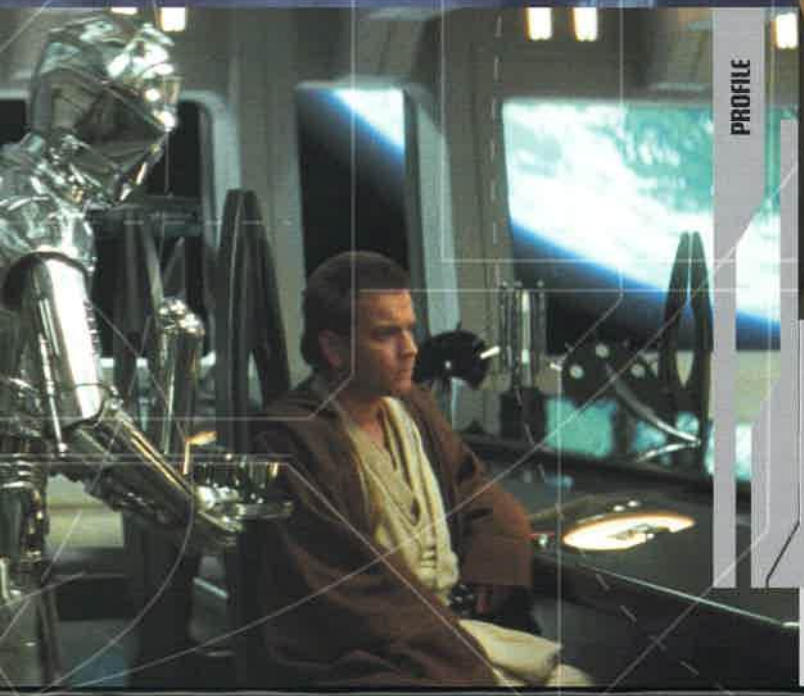
The 3PO series of protocol droids were one of Cybot Galactica's most successful product lines, and received fairly regular updates. Most were minor, but the introduction of the new generation of TranLang III communications modules (along with several other advancements) into the 3PO series was felt to deserve a name change, at least in the early models. The TC prefix was introduced and, contrary to previous 3PO models, the gender programming was almost universally feminine. Their livery was a deep red or a gleaming silver finish.

TC-14

One of the defining features of the TC-series protocol droids was their ability to, when necessary, divorce themselves from the situation in a dangerous operational environment or circumstance, regardless of the protocol required by the behaviour of those around them. In short, they operated calmly under pressure if by doing so their masters could be better served. This was of huge benefit when dealing with the rude, avaricious, cowardly Neimoidians of the Trade Federation, who frequently ignored protocol and insulted, ignored or even hid from their guests. The ongoing stresses of operating in such an environment would eventually have caused any TC unit to begin to question its masters, so the Trade Federation regularly wiped the memories of their protocol droids, including TC-14. As a result, she was able to greet the Jedi ambassadors Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi when they boarded the Trade Federation battleship over Naboo, while her masters plotted with a Sith Lord to have them killed.

Cruel Fate

TC-14 was serving drinks to the Jedi ambassadors when poisonous gas was pumped into the room. The Jedi let her live, recognising the deadly breach of protocol was not her choice. Unfortunately, TC-14 was transferred to the droid control ship that was destroyed by Anakin Skywalker at the Battle of Naboo.



PROFILE

TC-14

Type

Protocol Droid

Manufacturer

Cybot Galactica

Height

1.7 metres

CORUSCANT

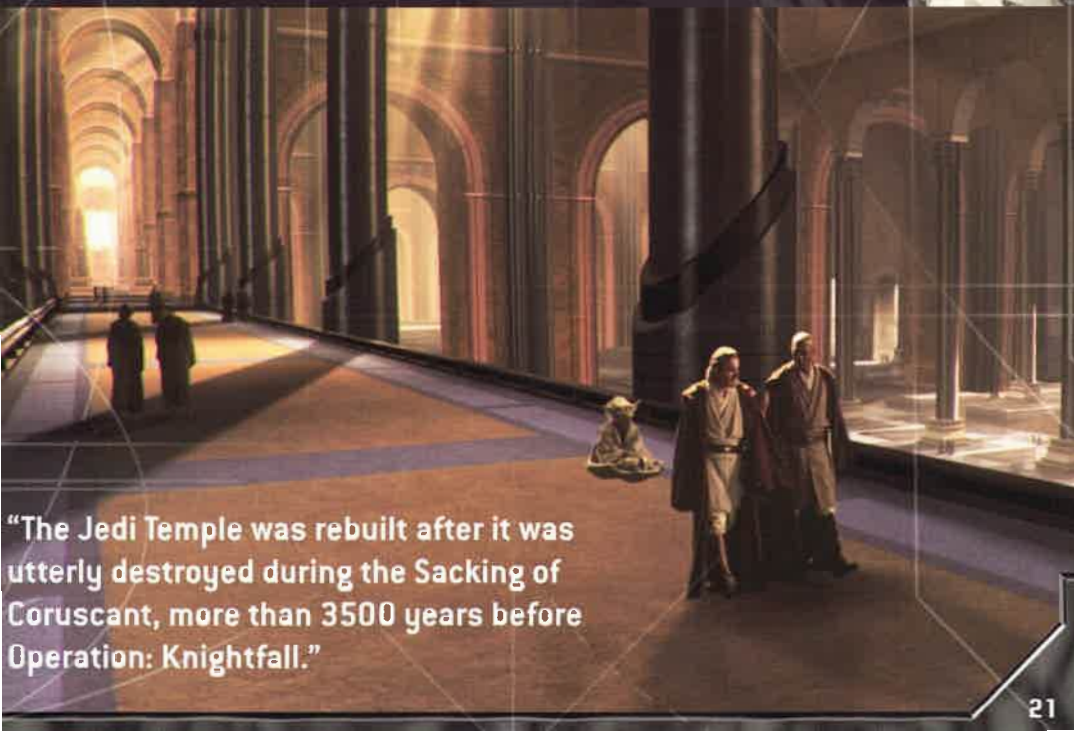
HISTORY OF THE JEDI TEMPLE

Founded nearly 4000 years before the rise of the Empire and its near-destruction during Operation: Knightfall, the Jedi Temple on Coruscant was established as a beacon of hope and justice for the galaxy.

In his private chambers on Coruscant, Supreme Chancellor Palpatine had an ancient stone frieze depicting one of the key battles of the Great Hyperspace War which had raged between Sith and Republic 5000 years earlier. After the war, during which Coruscant had been attacked directly, the Republic offered the Jedi Order a parcel of land as their own – specifically a great mountain at the heart of which was a Force-nexus of phenomenal power. The Republic had hoped the Jedi would establish themselves on Coruscant and be ready to defend the planet once again. However, the Order built only a few chambers for training and meditation within the mountain, and retained Ossus as their principal training centre and library.

Expansion

Around 1000 years after the mountain was given to the Jedi, the legendary Four Masters established the recognised shape of the great Temple ziggurat by plating the existing stone buildings in durasteel, making them vastly more secure. For some four centuries, the Jedi presence on the Sacred Spire mountain would continue to expand even as the city blocks slowly swallowed up the rest of Coruscant's surface. During the Great Sith War, only a few years after the Four Masters made their additions to the Temple, Ossus was destroyed. The Jedi Council transferred to Coruscant, along with all that had been saved from the libraries of Ossus. From this point on, the Jedi were inextricably linked to Coruscant.



"The Jedi Temple was rebuilt after it was utterly destroyed during the Sacking of Coruscant, more than 3500 years before Operation: Knightfall."

"The Jedi Archives began as one small chamber in the modest Temple complex after the destruction of Ossus nearly 4000 years before the Empire."

Operation: Knightfall

Knightfall was the codename for the assault on the Jedi Temple led by Darth Vader, commanding the elite forces of the 501st Legion. After the Jedi in the Temple were massacred, the building was largely abandoned, though Palpatine kept troops there in case any Jedi returned. It was reconstructed after the Yuuzhan Vong War on the orders of Jedi Master Luke Skywalker.

Rising From The Ashes

The galaxy saw thousands of years of conflict between Jedi and Sith, including the Old Sith Wars, the Great Galactic War, the Cold War and the New Sith Wars. During these wars, the Jedi Temple was almost entirely destroyed around 3600 years before Emperor Palpatine and Darth Vader sacked it for a second time. However, it was rebuilt and expanded until it had fully swallowed up the Sacred Spire. The Temple buildings were expanded greatly on four further occasions over the three millennia following the original reconstruction, including the completion of the vast Archives section some 2500 years before the Clone Wars.

After Ruusan

On occasion, the Jedi High Council had always met at the Temple on the galactic capital world, but the Jedi maintained many training centres and other libraries and such-like all across the galaxy. When the New Sith Wars came to an end at the Seventh Battle of Ruusan, the Sith were reduced to one warrior, Darth Bane, who instituted the Rule of Two that would allow the Sith to survive and one day return to almost destroy the Jedi Order. At this time, the Jedi Order fully established themselves on Coruscant, closing the vast majority of their other training centres. From then on, the High Council convened in the chamber atop the High Council Tower. For nearly a thousand years thereafter, the Jedi Temple remained home to the Order, until the dark times saw the formation of the Empire.

PRACTICE REMOTES

STINGING LESSONS

Emerging from technical frustrations experienced during the filming of Episode IV in 1976, the training remote became a part of the *Star Wars* galaxy that returned years later for 2002's Episode II.

Between 12 and 22 April 1976, a number of sequences were slated to be shot at Elstree Studios. Included were sequences in the Mos Eisley alleyways, and a point where C-3PO and R2-D2 hid from stormtroopers. These short scenes were eclipsed by the challenges that the production team were having with the cantina creatures. Lost in all of this were the spherical 'seeker drones' that were to assist the Imperial troops in their hunt for the droids.

Early Appearance

An element of the early drafts of the *Star Wars* script, the seeker drone first appeared in a production illustration created by Ralph McQuarrie and showing Luke being confronted by an aggressive alien. In the background is a spherical droid that is watching the face-off. In the tough and hectic filming schedule of 1976, with budgets already stretched and time running short, the seeker drones were proving problematic to film and were cut. Instead, director George Lucas took the concept and altered it so that the seeker drone became a practice remote that Luke Skywalker faced off against aboard the *Millennium*

Seeker drones

In the Expanded Universe, seeker drones include deadly versions designed to hunt down and assassinate those who would challenge the technological might of the Empire.

Falcon. That sequence was part of a parcel of shots filmed between 5 and 10 May. Many years later, however, the seeker drones were to return to the streets of Mos Eisley in the 1997 *Special Edition* of Episode IV. Added to most of the scenes featuring stormtroopers in Mos Eisley, the Imperial Mark IV Sentry Droid was a small black and white hovering droid measuring about 0.3m in diameter.

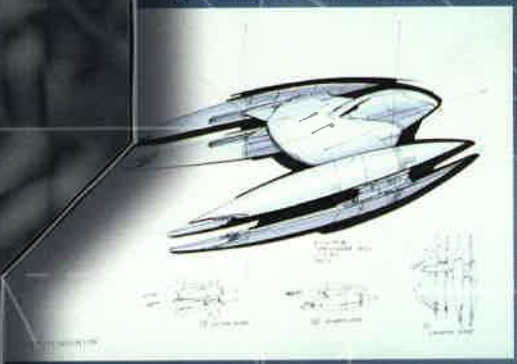
Episode II

Filmed at Fox Studios in Australia in 2000 and released in 2002, Episode II: *Attack of the Clones* featured the return of the training remote. Obi-Wan, unable to find the location of the planet Kamino, seeks advice from Master Yoda. He is overseeing the early lightsaber training of members of the Bear Clan – a group of Jedi Younglings. They are facing off against very familiar training remotes, although they seem to have better luck than Luke Skywalker did…

VULTURE-CLASS DROID

PILOTLESS STARFIGHTER

CREATING THE VULTURE DROID



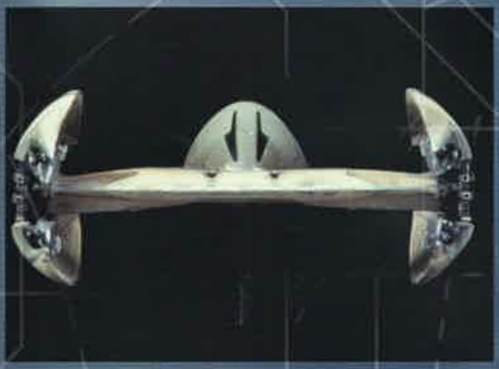
1 The approved sketches by Doug Chiang, drawn in 1997, show the various configurations of the vulture droid, then called the 'Star Fighter Droid'.

2 The small but deadly vulture droid was originally created as a digital character for Episode I: *The Phantom Menace*.

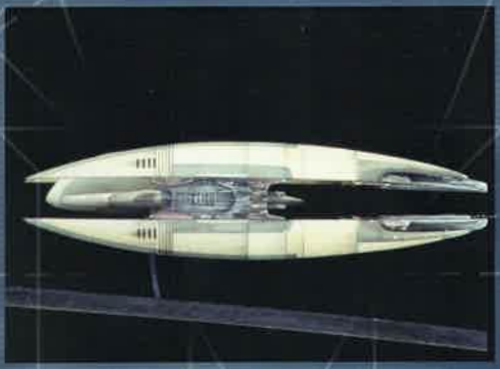
5 The digital version shown with its wings split, in walker mode.

6 For *The Phantom Menace*, the vulture droids were painted in the brown Trade Federation livery.

Doug Chiang's early sketches for the vulture droid were closer in style to the TIE fighter, for which it was to provide a visual link. Ultimately, it was decided by Chiang and George Lucas that the fighter should be a droid ship that would no longer need a pilot or cockpit.



3 A model of the vulture droid starfighter was built by ILM model maker John Goodson. Above: Goodson's model, front view.



4 The model was used in lighting tests to assist the digital artists in creating the versions seen in the film. Above: the right side of Goodson's model.

7 For their appearance in Episode III, the vulture droids became part of the Separatist forces.

8 As a result, the models gained the blue and white livery of the Confederacy of Independent Systems.

DID YOU KNOW?

1 What weapons could the vulture droid use when in walker mode?

2 Who were the 'Jedi Bendu'?

3 The Jedi Temple on Coruscant is a mixture of which terrestrial architectural styles?

ANSWERS:

1. The vulture droid could only use its energy torpedoes in walker mode, as its blaster cannon were pointed at the ground.

2. Mentioned in the rough draft of the Star Wars script back in 1974, the 'Jedi Bendu' were warriors who were being hunted down by the Knights of Sith who fought for the new Empire.

3. The Jedi Temple is a mixture of Gothic, Art Deco, ancient Chinese and Egyptian architecture.

S

Snootles, Sy

Character
Episode VI

Sy was a determined and pragmatic Pa'lowick singer. She was one of the original members of the Max Rebo Band, having been picked out by the original manager, Evar Orbus. When Orbus was killed, Sy took over running the band. However, she decided that Max Rebo should be the public face – she'd seen what had happened to Evar Orbus and didn't want to meet the same violent demise. Unfortunately, Max effectively sold the entire band into slavery after a deal with Jabba the Hutt that saw the band trapped in the Hutt's palace on Tatooine. Following Jabba's death, the band went their separate ways. Sy's career never recovered, however, and she ended up touring the Outer Rim Territories under various stage names.

Su, Lama

Character
Episode II

Lama Su was the prime minister of Kamino who accepted the contract from Jedi Master Sifo-Dyas to begin creation of the clone army for the Republic. Lama Su was not particularly aware of the galaxy at large, only that the commission for the army would be a huge boost for his world's economy. In the Clone Wars, Lama Su worked with the ARC troopers to defend his planet from the Separatists.

Sullust

Location
Expanded Universe

Volcanic Sullust was home to the Sullustan people and the immense SoroSuub Corporation, part of the Commerce Guild. It was effectively run by SoroSuub and sided with the Confederacy in the Clone Wars. SoroSuub then supported the Empire, though many of its people supported the Rebels. Just before the Battle of Yavin, a pro-Alliance group took over SoroSuub, and began to aid the Rebels more directly. After the Battle of Endor, Sullust openly joined the Alliance and then the New Republic.

Super battle droid

Droid
Episodes II & III

The B2 super battle droid was the successor to the B1 droid – mainstay of the Trade Federation armies that invaded Naboo. More independent than the B1, the heavily armoured droids had weapons built into their right (and sometimes left) forearm. They were more expensive than the B1 droids, so never fully replaced their weaker predecessors during the Clone Wars.

Suubatar

Creature
Expanded Universe

Suubatar were six-metre-tall omnivorous domesticated beasts of burden from the planet Ansion. Mainly used as mounts, they had six legs each with six toes. Their mouths hinged to allow them to swallow food whole. With four protruding canines, the suubatar could look fiercer than it was.

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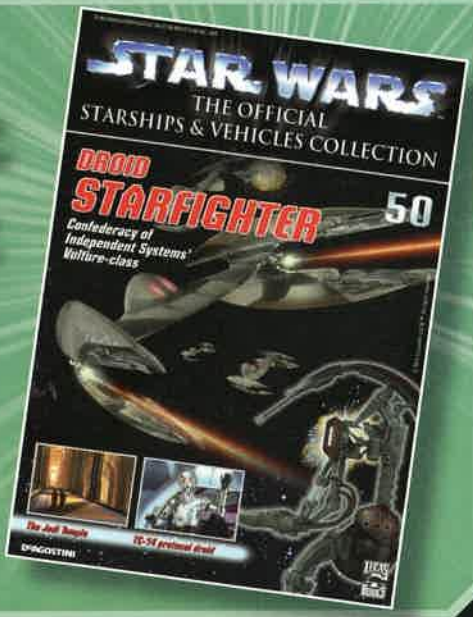
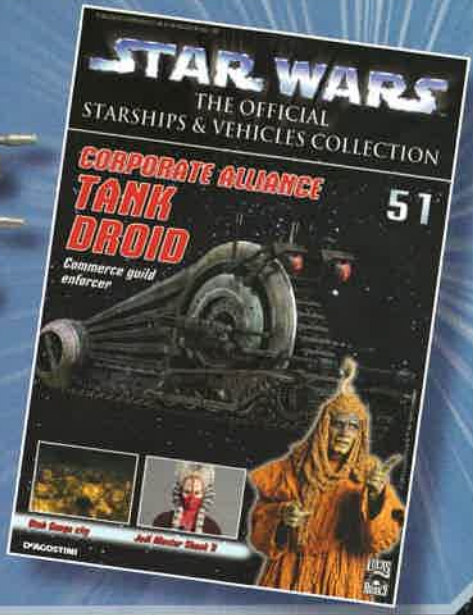
DROID
STARFIGHTER



IN YOUR NEXT ISSUE

WITH ISSUE 51:
CORPORATE ALLIANCE
TANK DROID



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